



NEWSLETTER OF THE LONDON CHAPTER
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



MAY, 1984

84-5

DAVID BOYLE AND THE MYTH OF THE MOUND BUILDERS

Dr. Gerald Killan of King's College will present the last lecture of this season's agenda. His talk deals with David Boyle's attempt to understand the archaeological mound building phenomenon of Ontario and adjacent states in light of the prevailing often bigoted views of late nineteenth century scholars concerning Native people's potential for sophisticated cultural expression.

Meeting time is 8:00 P.M. at the Museum of Indian Archaeology (1600 Attawandaron Road) on Thursday, May 10. Let's have another good turnout for the final presentation of our season!

Chapter Executive

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EXECUTIVE REPORT

Our busy Chapter executive met a second time in April, on Wednesday the eighteenth. Present at the London meeting were Rob, Linda and George. Planning continued for the fall bus tour, and it was decided to give last year's proposed destinations another try. A smaller bus may be booked for our five to six day tour of the Washington vicinity during the Thanksgiving holiday period. Participants will visit the Smithsonian Institute, Colonial Williamsburg and the Thunderbird Museum and Archaeological Park. Janie Fox will assist in booking the tour.

President Rob Pihl is in the process of setting up meetings with various local facilities in preparation for the 1985 Symposium, as well as arranging for our Fanshawe Park summer picnic. Final details concerning the picnic will be presented in our supplementary June KEWA issue.

The executive meeting agenda closed with discussions regarding the design and printing of new membership cards, and our Chapter's upcoming Arch Notes submission. Information on the Washington bus tour and our Chapter picnic will be sent to Mike Kirby.

SOCIAL REPORT

Not much to report this month, except for the unfortunate consensus that

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the C.A.A. conference in Victoria was less than stimulating. Don't forget the June 9th Chapter picnic! Word has it that the oft talked about Dorchester Swamp Survey is about to begin; so, if you want some fresh air and exercise, be sure to get in touch with Dave Smith or Jim Keron.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

May 5 - 6	<i>Archaeological Conservation Program Annual Meeting</i> London
May 7 - 9	<i>The Historic Building as a Museum</i> Ontario Museum Association London
June 9 - 10	<i>Trade Gun Conference</i> Rochester Museum and Science Center

Neal Ferris and Sparky (our micro-computer) have been working night and day to produce this month's research paper. In fact, they worked so hard that there was no room in this issue for my article.....eat your heart out Dick!

BUTTONS I HAVE KNOWN

NEAL FERRIS

Work by Ian Kenyon and myself last summer on Mohawk Village afforded us an opportunity to observe several aspects of nineteenth century life (for a discussion of these, see Kenyon and Ferris, 1984). I was particularly intrigued by features 2 and 12, being the cellars of two sequentially occupied cabins; the first dated at 1800-35, the other at 1835-60. I felt that a comparison of collections from the early and late cellars might reveal chronological trends within specific artifact classes. The diversity and quantity of buttons recovered made this class appear ideal for a useful, but quick, comparison. The results, however, answered little and created a host of questions. Since the few available discussions on archaeological collections of NON-military buttons tended to offer site-specific chronologies and usually ignored the effects of change in the industry itself (cf. South, 1964; Olsen, 1963), the only way to answer these questions would be to start from scratch, examining other collections and reviewing the history of button-making. My "quick and easy" study had suddenly become anything but quick and easy.

THE BUSINESS OF MAKING BUTTONS

Like most endeavors of the 1800's, button industries experienced many successive

changes - and in every aspect of the trade; from manufacture technique to raw material used to fashions preferred. The consequences of these changes, while no doubt the cause of many headaches for button manufacturers at the time, have proven to be useful chronological indicators on nineteenth century domestic sites.

While impossible to determine when buttons first appeared as functional devices, a button industry had developed by the seventeenth century. The first two major button forms were simple metal-ring objects, wrapped with thread or covered with cloth. This cottage industry would last until the 1760's, when metal buttons became popular with men's fashions (White, 1977; 68). Linen buttons would continue to be produced until the latter part of the nineteenth century, but in much smaller numbers (Peacock, 1972; 30/fig. 3). The advent of the metal button brought with it the development of factories and concentrated areas of manufacture, such as in Birmingham. The button trade had become a profession.

Metal buttons were fashioned either by being stamped from a sheet of metal (fig. 1; no. 1,2,8) or, by the 1790's, being cast into a mould (Appleton's 1863; 220/fig. 1; no. 3-7,9,10). Further, metal buttons were either "one-pieces" (fig. 1; no. 1-4,8), or "two-pieces", where a cover was clamped to a backing (fig. 1; no. 5-7,9,10). Most metal buttons were either plated or gilded. This refers to a finishing technique for buttons, involving a "bath and bake" method where each item, after a shank has been soldered on, is dipped various times into a solution containing any number of metals (gold in the case of gilding), and then heated in a bake-oven (Anonymous, nd; 36-39). The end-result was a button with a very shiny lustre. Many of these gilt buttons are stamped on the back, indicating the type, quality and colour of gilt used (cf. fig. 1, no. 1,6,7).

Gilt buttons of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were quite fashionable, worn on every garment imaginable and selected with the same care as used in choosing what jewelry to put on. During their period of almost exclusive popularity, metal buttons were worn by men, women, and children; and were worn on coats, shirts, waistcoats, sleeves, leggings, dresses and even boots. However, tastes and fashions change, and over-buttoning came to be considered indiscreet. "The gentleman of Victorian England wears the quietest possible buttons to his garments, and as few of them as is consistent with decency and convenience." (Turner, 1866; 433). A challenge to the popularity of gilt buttons came in 1820, when Mr. B. Sanders introduced the cloth-covered, or florentine button (fig. 1, no. 11-12). With the further addition in 1825 of a "flexable shank" (a string or cloth shank in the shell of the button which was pulled out and considered a revolutionary invention at the time), this four-piece "pressed" button (see fig.2) was, accordingly, "...suited to a growing taste in the direction of simplicity and plainness..." (Turner, 1863; 435).

Competition from the florentine and cheaper imports forced Birmingham button-makers to petition the King in order to protect their trade in 1830. Successful for a short period, competition remained fierce, and in 1840 the gilt industry itself dealt a death blow by introducing electroplating. Nick-named "slap-dash", this technique became notorious throughout the trade. It was first hailed as a cheap way to compete with the florentine, but the truth was that electroplated buttons became tarnished before they arrived at the retailer's shop, who subsequently could not even give them away (Strutt, ed., 1851; 172). By the 1850's, metal button makers either expanded to include other classes of buttons, or maintained a small share of the market by making best fancy and uniform buttons, such as the firm of Hamond, Turner and Sons (fig. 8, no. 3).

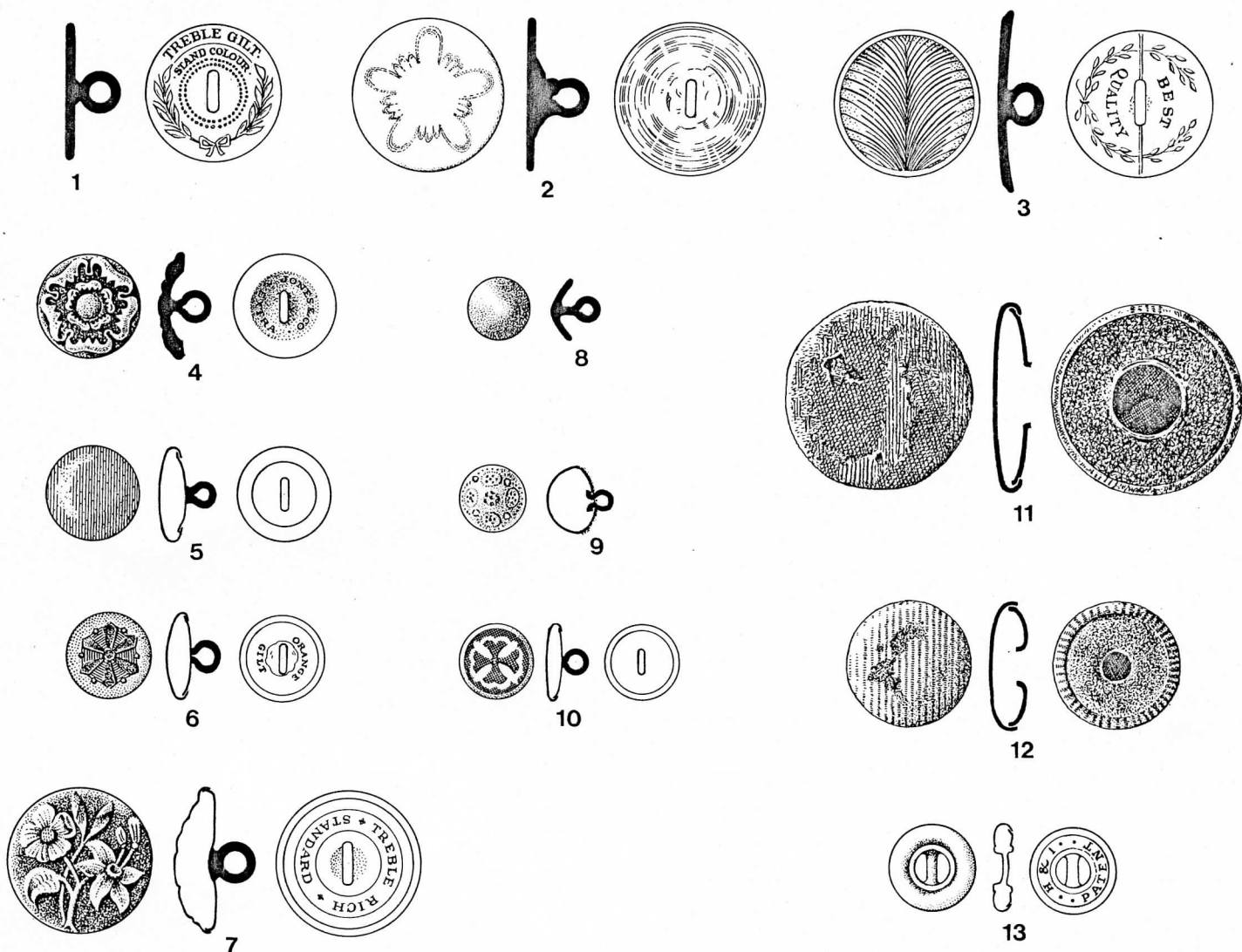


Figure 1: Metal Buttons

1-Piece (1-4), 2-Piece (5-7, 9-10), Covered (11-12), Metal Brace (13-15). 1-3, 7, 11-12 are coat buttons, 4-6 are for waistcoats or vests, while 8-10 are probably sleeve buttons (no. 8 may even be a boot or legging button). 13 is a "fly" button, while 14 and 15 were for attaching suspenders to pants. No. 12 may have been for a woman's coat. No. 1-3, 7, 9: MV2. No. 4-5, 8, 10, 15: C.P. No. 6, 11, 13-14: MV12. No. 12: Mel.



ALL BUTTON DRAWINGS IN TEXT TO ACTUAL SIZE.

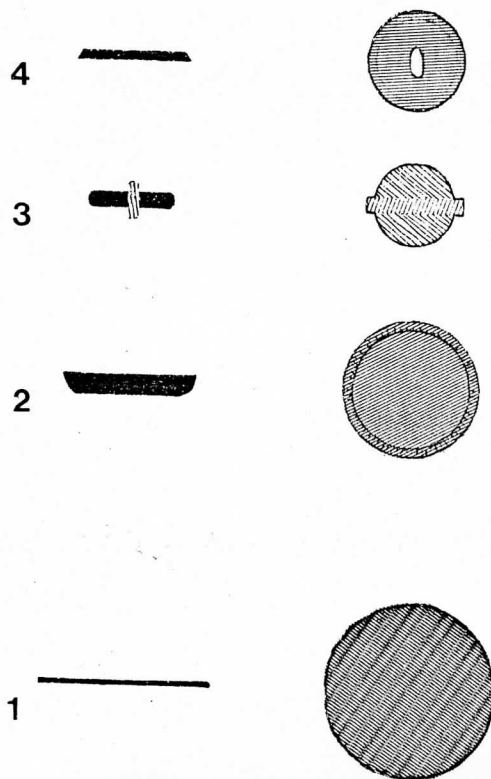


Figure 2: The Exploding Florentine

These cloth covered buttons were made by putting the four "layers" into a press. A circular piece of cloth (1) is placed at the bottom of a press. A metal shell (2) is then placed on top, and the two are pressed together. A layer of padding (3) wound by a thread is next added, followed by a metal collet (4). The edges of the cloth-covered shell are pressed over the collet, clamping the button together. The wrapped thread is then pulled through an eyelet on the collet, forming the flexible shank (illustration adapted from Anonymous, n.d.; 41).

Before moving on to other button classes, a consideration of the metal brace button should be made (fig. 1, no. 13-15). These utilitarian buttons are found throughout the nineteenth century, and were used almost exclusively for pant suspenders. Number 13 of figure 1 however, was used as a "fly" button. For somewhat obvious and painful reasons, these buttons were not used on underclothing.

Another class of button almost totally utilitarian in function were those made from bone (fig. 4, no. 1-6). These buttons were intended primarily for men's underwear items, as well as for pant flys (Peacock, 1972; 21), and were made from the shinbones of various animals. They also augmented ladies linen buttons, and were used as brace buttons. Tubes were drilled out of the bone, and then cut into slices; ringlets being drilled into the button by means of a common lathe (Appleton's, 1863; 221). Bone buttons came in two sizes - one for pant flys and the other for braces and underwear - but larger specimens were not uncommon, especially of the round-lip type (fig. 4, no. 1). These larger buttons, I feel, were used to button up the ends of a woman's shawl or cloak, since this was the primary use of such buttons during the eighteenth century (Anonymous, n.d.; 32). Polished bone buttons which had shank-holes drilled into their base (fig. 4, no. 6), are an almost unheard of type in British trade. Such examples are probably derived from the American trade, although anyone who had a lathe and a dead cow or horse, theoretically, could have started up their own business of making bone buttons during the 1800's.

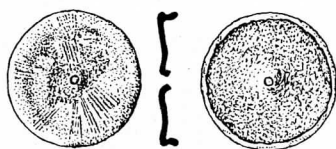


Figure 3: Virtue's Last Defense

Largely replaced in the 1760's by metal buttons, linen buttons continued to be made until the late 1800's. The example above would originally have been layered with linen, and ribbed by rows of thread. During the 1800's, this button was used mostly for ladies undergarments (Melwood).

Dating well back into the eighteenth century, bone buttons remained popular because of their function. During the latter part of the nineteenth century however, bone buttons were replaced in

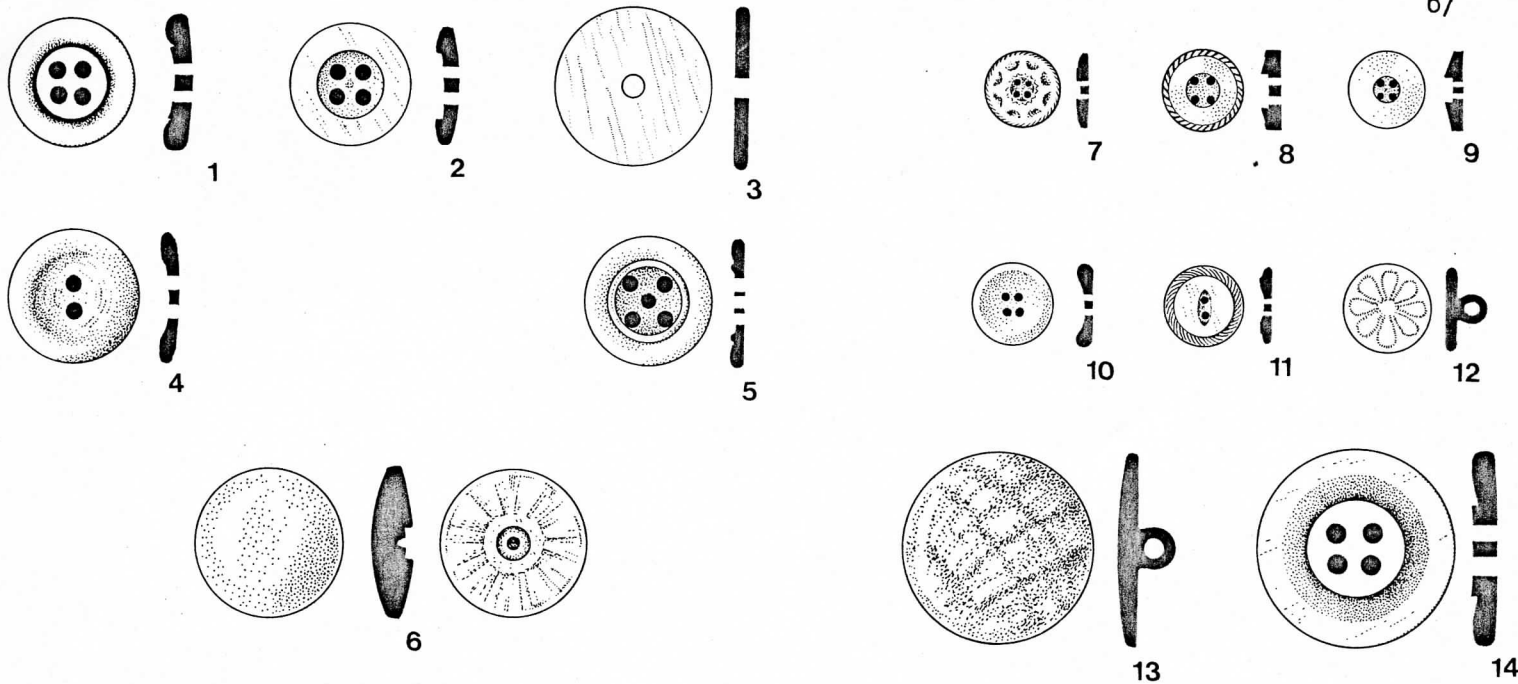
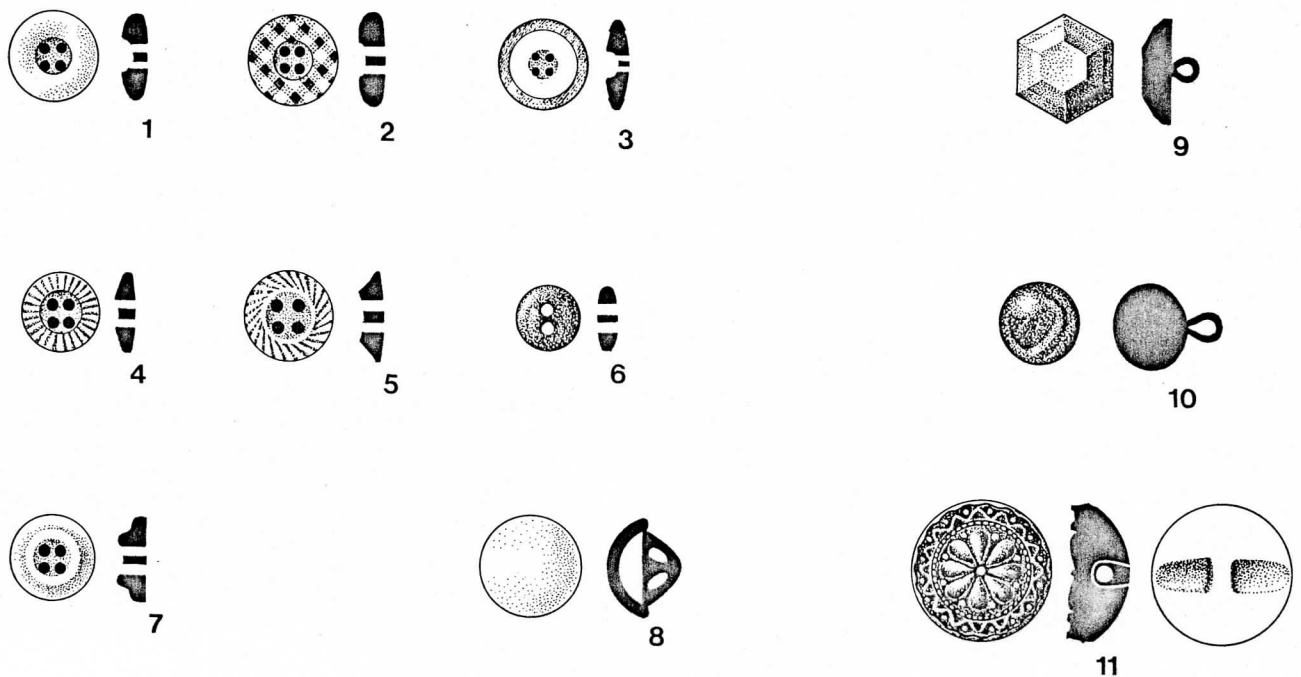


Figure 4: Bone and Pearl Buttons

Bone types: 1-rd. lip, 2-ft. lip, 3-disc, 4-concave, 5-flat backed (these also come with three ringlets), 6-polished. Primarily utilitarian in use, only Nos. 1, 3, and 6 were made in sizes for outerwear. Pearl types: 7-plain, 8, 9-dep. center, 10, 11-concave, 12, 13-shanked, 13, 14-polished. 7-11 were worn on shirts, 13-14 were used for coats, and 12 may have been used on a waistcoat. Nos. 1-6, 9-11, 13-14: MV12. No. 7: Crin. Nos. 8, 12: C.P.

Figure 5: Agate and Glass Buttons

Agate types: 1 to 5-plain, 6-oval eye, 7-inkwell, 8-selfshanked. Of the plain types, No. 2 is a calico, No. 3 has a metal ring around the edge, and 4-5 are moulded varieties. These buttons were primarily used on shirts, although No. 8 was probably used for children's dresses. Glass types: 1, 3-fancy glass, 2-glass-ball. No. 2 was used on children's clothing, while the fancy glass types would be used primarily for elaborate dress. Nos. 1-4: MV12, No. 5: C.G., Nos. 6, 9: Mel., Nos. 7-8, 11: Crin.



popularity by ones made of vegetable ivory. Actually the kernel of a corozo nut, vegetable ivory was first introduced during the 1850's, although large scale operations did not commence until the 1870's (Peacock, 1972; 44). Vegetable ivory was cheap, easy to cut, and retained a dye much easier than bone. As such, bone buttons declined in use, although production continued in much smaller quantities until the beginning of the twentieth century.

Pearl buttons were another almost exclusive domain of the Birmingham industry during the early nineteenth century. It is unclear when pearl buttons were first introduced, but they seem to really become popular after 1820. Seashell was the preferred material, imported from around the world. Blanks were drilled with a tubular saw, and then split into sections. These pieces were either drilled to accommodate a v-shaped shank (fig. 4, no. 12-13), or had ringlets drilled through them (fig. 4, no. 7-11,14). Many of the pearl buttons were engraved, while a few others were polished (fig. 4, no. 13-14).

Worn mostly on shirts and blouses - with larger specimens used for waistcoats, frocks, and full-length coats - pearl buttons declined due to foreign competition and historical circumstance. A large percentage of the market was made up of exports to America. With the occurrence of the Civil War, all exports to the States were stopped. By the time the cessation was over, American manufacturers of pearl buttons had started up, taking away any demand for the Birmingham item (White, 1977; 75). Further, the French controlled sales to Continental Europe, and were actively exporting agates, which were also used as shirt buttons, but which were significantly cheaper than pearl buttons. Because it was so cheap to make pearl buttons even local entrepreneurs were able to establish factories, thus taking away any market for the Birmingham product (A pearl-button industry was established in Kitchener in 1891 (Zimmerman, 1958). This was the first formalized button factory in Canada).

Agate buttons, known variously as ceramics, porcelains, white glass, opals, and small chinas, were invented in 1840, by Richard Prosser (Turner, 1866; 443/ fig. 5, no. 1-8). Not long after, Felix Bapertrosses, in what appears to be an act of industrial espionage, came from France to England, learned about the process, and then returned to France. There, with support from French government, he set up a factory and was able to produce agates at a far lesser cost than the British firm. It is interesting to note that Bapertrosses's company is still in business today. To make matters worse, Richard Prosser's brother, Thomas, emigrated to America and set up his own firm there (Peacock, 1972; 100). These events effectively collapsed the fledgling British trade by the early 1850's. France became the leaders in exporting agates to foreign markets, while the American firm served the American market.

Agate buttons were made through a process of pressing dry clay. These buttons were extremely cheap, with a gross (144 items) going for just under 1d in the 1860's (Turner, 1866; 443). These buttons were used on men's shirts, for women's dresses, and on children's clothing. Usually white in colour - although it is not uncommon for the occasional one to be black or brown - agates came in few types, but the basic "plain" item (fig. 5, no. 1) can be painted with various fabric designs (fig. 5, no. 2), referred to as "calicos". Many different patterns were available for the calico button, and these were usually bought to match the pattern of a material used for a garment. Other plain agates had painted slips or bands of metal around the edge (fig. 5, no. 3), or came in various moulded patterns (fig. 5, no. 4,5). "Inkwells" (fig. 5, no. 7) were primarily for shirts, while the "oval-eye" type (fig. 5, no. 8), as well as shanked and self-shanked agates (fig. 5, no. 9), were primarily used on boy's dresses (Peacock, 1972; 100).

Buttons came in a variety of materials beyond the ones already discussed, which included wood, ivory and horn. Horn buttons (actually made from boiled cow hoofs) were made as early as 1750, but became popular in the 1830's, and were worn chiefly on children's and ladies dresses (Turner, 1866; 436), and were usually dyed a brown, red, green, or black colour (Strutt, ed. 1851; 172). The "horn" material was cooked at a high temperature, where it became liquefied, and was poured into a mould. The heating process caused the finished product to have a rather "sticky" feel, and to appear plastic-like. This method of production was stopped in 1873 when natural horn, made from imported buffalo horn, became popular. The method employed for this product was similar to that used for bone buttons.

Buttons were also made from coloured glass (fig. 5, no. 11), and from rubber (fig. 6). These buttons rarely appear, with the exception of some glass types, before 1850, and never make any real impact on the industry or in fashion trends. The rubber item, which was an American monopoly, was not at all appreciated by the European market, due mostly to their rather "...peculiar smell." (Turner, 1866; 447). Moulded glass buttons (fig. 5, no. 9,11), were normally used for coat-links, and occasionally on coats and dresses. Referred to as "fancy-glass", these buttons were around as early as the 1830's, and usually came shanked or self-shanked. Glass-balls (fig. 5, 10), were introduced about 1850, and attracted attention during the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, where the button was described as that which "...was lately the pleasure of admiring mothers to sprinkle their little boys profusely, and which are also much in demand for exportation to the African chiefs, who have the true barbarian love of glitter." (Strutt, ed. 1851; 172). Considering that big, shiny gilt buttons were popular until the 1840's, one can only marvel at how far Victorian Society had advanced - in just ten years - from their more "barbarous ancestors".

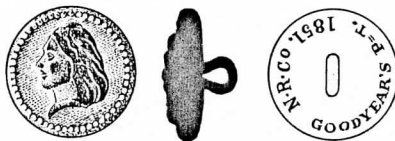


Figure 6: America's Contribution

Patented in 1851, buttons were only one item made of rubber. At least one rubber button usually turns up on any site occupied after 1850. They don't appear to be found in any quantities however, suggesting, in Canada at least, that rubber buttons were never more than a novelty item. The "peculiar" smell these buttons are reported to have does not survive archaeologically. Neither did it seem to bother the Liberty Head on the example above (Melwood).

THE BUSINESS OF BUYING BUTTONS

General store ledger, account and invoice books reflect both the cost of goods in Upper Canada during any given point in the 1800's, as well as being an indicator to when changes in European fashion and industry first start appearing in this part of the world. These documents have proven useful in previous archaeological research identifying stylistic and price changes in ceramic wares of the nineteenth century

1846 *Stephenson's*

<i>Bot of Gillespie & Moffatt</i>			
5 1 Bdl 1 doz Morris Improved Gilt Buttons in 47	2	1	2
6 1 " 2 x but buttons in 47 3 1/2 feet	2	1	2
7 1 Bdl 3 B Metal Braces	3	15	45
1/4 doz Gilt Hooks & Eyes in Bdl white	11 1/2	3	33
3 Gilt Pleated	3	1	3
1/4 doz Gilt Brass Buttons in white & Mkt	15 1/2	15	3
1 Gilt Band but in 12607	49	3	9
1 in Sporting an 8006	7	7	1
1 in Covered Coat 12707	7 1/2	7	6
1 in Home an 11342	4 1/2	6	3
1 in Sporting an 8037	14	7	1
8 in Agate	1/2	3	9
1/2 in Blue Pins	9	2	6
1/2 doz Dressing Combs 15 3/4 3 1/2	7	8	
1 in White Pins	4	9	
1/2 in Curtain Pins in 3 1/2 3 1/2 7 1/2	11	2	
1/2 in Sea Bells in 4 1/2 2 1/2 1275-4	10	7	
<i>not forward</i>		13	13

Figure 7: Buttons, Buttons, and More Buttons

Keeping up with changes in styles, most merchants offered as wide a variety of buttons to their customers as was available from the wholesaler, established in the port towns of Toronto, Hamilton, and, in the case above, Montreal. This excerpt from an invoice for 1846 is significant in that it is the earliest recorded example of agate buttons coming into Ontario found to date (Stephenson, 1842-1848).

(cf. Kenyon, 1983). Invoice books are particularly useful, since they reflect the type and price of goods stocked, and therefore reflect what is perceived to be currently in demand by the customer.

The earliest such document examined is the invoice book of Thomas Cummings, who ran a general store in the village of Chippawa on the Canadian side of Niagara River from 1800-12 (Cruikshank, 1929). The ledger covers the years 1810-11. Vague in description, buttons are simply classified as coat, vest or sleeve, and probably refer to gilt buttons. The prices cited are the highest I have ever seen for a gross of buttons, due, in part, to the tensions between the States and Britain at that time, which caused many items to have inflated prices.

Unfortunately, the next available set of invoice books are from the 1840's, leaving a gap of thirty years. It is not surprising then to see florentine, fancy horn, and pearl buttons appearing regularly in the records. One book of interest, from Picton, Ontario, covers the period of 1842-1848 (Stephenson). Unusually descriptive (see fig. 7), this book lists the regular shipments of dry goods received from various distributors in Montreal. Prices for this invoice book are listed in Halifax currency. All prices listed here are in shillings and pence (shilling/pence). In the 1840's, one Halifax shilling was equivalent to twenty cents.

Gilt and fancy gilt buttons are a regular item, as are sporting coat (fig. 8), shanked pearl, shirt pearls, fancy horn, florentine, silk and velvet (fancy florentines), along with both bone and metal braces, and linen buttons. Buttons such as fancy-glass, "dead-eyes", and "Japed", make the occasional appearance. Stephenson is also fairly consistent in distinguishing vest, shirt and coat types. Coat and vest buttons are usually gilt, florentine, horn or pearl, with vest buttons usually about half the price of ones for a coat. For each class of button, there appears to be several varieties available, which significantly vary in price from one to the other. On average, fancy gilt, gilt and sporting coat buttons - as well as one variety of fancy velvet - are the most expensive, ranging anywhere from 16/- a gross for some sporting coat items, to 7/- for plain gilt. Horn and pearl coat and jacket buttons usually range in price from 8/- to 5/5.

Pearl shirt buttons, bone brace, and metal brace buttons all come in more than one variety, but far fewer than for the coat and vest types. Pearl shirts range from 3/5 to 1/7. Metal brace buttons range in price from 3/- to 1/10, while bone braces can go as high as 2/-, and as low as -/8 for "fly" buttons. There is one listing in this ledger of "bone coat" buttons, probably referring to the large round lipped variety, and was priced at 10/-.

The Stephenson book covers that period immediately after agate buttons were introduced to the market. It was hoped that a listing for these would appear in the book, since Stephenson did try to keep stocked with the most current of items (for example, flow-blue ceramics appear in his list of goods shortly after its inception). Fortunately, near the end of the book, one reference to agates was found, received in a shipment dated June 6, 1846 (fig. 7). With it not appearing again in any of the later invoices, agate buttons may not have been "hot-selling" items at first, and simply considered novelties. It is interesting to note, however, that agates, at 1/3, are even then considerably cheaper than their pearl counterparts.

Beyond the obvious difference in variety of button types available and materials used in button manufacture, one distinction between the 1810-11 invoice book and Stephenson's is the lack of sleeve buttons listed in the later document. Presumably these buttons fell victim to that Victorian distaste for overbuttoning discussed earlier.

During the 1860's, button varieties are similar to the 1840's, with the notable inclusion of "black and fancy India rubber" buttons (Kerr, Brown & Co., 1863). The cloth-covered types appear to be the most popular for coats and vests; including florentines, tweeds, drab and black florentines, and compositions. In the Thomas Cannon invoice book covering 1860-64, both pearl and metal buttons appear less often than in earlier times. Further, prices have changed format, now being listed in dollar values, due to the fact that Canada went decimal in 1858. Oddly enough, bone brace buttons appear to be the most expensive type listed, ranging from \$2.00 to \$1.10. Cloth covered, pearl and fancy coat (metal) buttons fall within the \$1.00 to \$1.50 range, while fancy glass and agates are the cheapest classes, at twenty-five to fifty cents a gross.

THE BUSINESS OF FINDING BUTTONS

Finally, we can turn to the archaeological data. Seven button collections from five sites were analysed for this study. Collections were examined from features 2 and 12 of Mohawk Village (MV 2 and MV12), mentioned previously. Two collections were also analysed from the John Croker Site, Dunn.Twp., Haldimand Co. (Kenyon and Faux; 1981). Croker occupied the site from about 1818 to possibly the late thirties or early forties, with a later occupation impossible to pin down at present. A large pit (C.P.) was excavated containing the majority of the buttons from the site (including eight military buttons not considered in this study. See this month's Nineteenth Century Notes). This pit was used from around 1820 to 1845. Material recovered in the screened ploughzone (C.G.) contained some pit-associated material, but was largely made up of debris deposited after the pit had been filled in, and dates to the end of site occupation.

Melwood (Mel.) was occupied by Jacob Beer from 1855 to the late 1860's (Ferris and Kenyon, 1983), and is located in Metcalfe Twp., Middlesex County. This site was

excavated in the summer of 1982. Crinan Creek (Crin.) was occupied from 1851-1863, by Robert Grant, and is located in Aldborough Twp., Elgin Co. This site was also excavated during the summer of 1982, as a rescue operation by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (Lennox and Pegg, 1982).

The final collection looked at was from the Ganong (Gan.) site, located in Halton County. This site was occupied ca. 1810 to sometime in the 1820's. Roberta O'Brien and several O.A.S. volunteers assessed and surface-collected the site in 1982. Unfortunately, because it was not excavated, the collection from this site is rather small, and probably biased towards metal buttons. Future excavations on the site in the near future (Mary Ambrose, per. comm.), should remove this bias.

TABLE #1 : BUTTONS BY RAW MATERIAL - ALL COLLECTIONS

	C.P.		C.G.		MV12		MV2		Me1.		Crin.		Gan.		
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	Total
Bone :	37	41.0	07	29.0	69	38.1	22	46.8	15	27.8	22	28.2	03	20.0	175
Metal :	28	31.0	02	08.0	40	22.1	25	53.2	15	27.8	08	10.2	12	80.0	130
Agate :	01	01.0	09	38.0	41	22.6	--	----	19	35.2	34	43.6	--	----	104
Pearl :	24	27.0	06	25.0	29	16.1	--	----	03	05.6	09	11.6	--	----	71
Glass :	--	----	--	----	02	01.6	--	----	01	01.8	02	02.6	--	----	05
Rubber :	--	----	--	----	--	----	--	----	01	01.8	03	03.8	--	----	04
Total :	90		24		181		47		54		78		15		489

Table 1 (which includes fragmentary buttons) shows each collection broken down into classes. The earliest sites (MV2 and Gan.) are conspicuous by their lack of variety. While pearl and horn buttons are definitely around during this time, their accessibility is limited and the popularity of metal buttons probably made the demand for these other items too finite for a rural merchant to bother ordering.

The next two sites, chronologically (Croker and MV12), show a slight decrease in the ratio of metal buttons, while bone buttons continue to maintain a sizable portion of the collection. Both show quantities of pearl buttons, and it is probably around this time (1830's and 1840's) that pearl shirt buttons achieve their greatest popularity. At some point in its history, MV12 would have had a higher percentage of pearl buttons, but this site was also occupied during the introduction of agates, which would have decreased the overall percentage of pearls. Croker also reflects the introduction of agates, but in a rather interesting way archaeologically. The large refuse pit on Croker does not appear to have been used past the mid-1840's. However, the site location was occupied for a slightly later period of time. This is clearly illustrated by the agate collections, with only one being found in the pit (probably intrusive) while a relatively large percentage (38%) of agates were recovered from the above (and slightly later) areas of the site. C.P., therefore, must have just missed the introduction of agates, which clearly was in the second half of the 1840's.

The last two sites (Me1. and Crin.) reflect both continuing trends and introduction of new items. Metal and bone buttons have significantly decreased in percentage, while pearl buttons have become little more than an oddity. This is due, obviously, to the tremendous increase in agates, which proves, once again, that cheaper is better. These two collections do have a nominal amount of rubber and glass buttons, as does MV12 (a rubber button was found in a pit associated with this cellar). However, their quantity is so small as to make them insignificant, except for the fact that they are phenomenon of the post-1850 period.

TABLE #2 : BONE BUTTONS BY TYPE - ALL COLLECTIONS

(cm)	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	Total
Rd. Lip :			01	02	04	07	01	05	25	52	04	07							01	01		01			111
Ft. Lip :					02	02		03	11	10		01													29
Disc :			01	02	01			01	01	03	02	02		01	01										15
Ft. Back :				01	03	01				04	01	01													11
Concave :									01	02	01														04
Polished :													01			01									02
Total :	--	--	01	04	06	07	09	02	10	45	66	07	09	01	01	01	--	--	01	01	--	01	--	--	172

TABLE #3 : METAL BUTTONS BY TYPE - ALL COLLECTIONS

(cm)	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	Total
1-Piece :			01	01	01		04	03	06	05	02		08	07	02	02	01	02		01			01		47
2-Piece :			02	06	02		01	01				01			02	01		01	01		02				20
Covered :						01	01	01			01	01	01	02	02		02	01	01		01	02	02		19
Linen :						03				01		01													05
Brace :							04		04	14	10	03	01												36
Total :	--	--	03	07	03	04	10	05	11	19	14	05	10	09	06	03	03	04	02	01	03	02	03	--	127

TABLE #4 : PEARL BUTTONS BY TYPE - ALL COLLECTIONS

(cm)	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	Total
Plain :		02	14	05	02	02	01																		26
Concave :		01	09	03																					13
Dep. Center :	02	04	10	05																					21
Polished :								01								01			04						06
Shanked :					01				03										01						05
Total :	02	07	33	13	03	02	01	01	03	--	--	--	--	--	--	01	--	--	05	--	--	--	--	--	71

TABLE #5 : AGATE BUTTONS BY TYPE - ALL COLLECTIONS

(cm)	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	Total
Plain :	01		05	39	31	01	02	01	02	01															83
Oval Eye :	02																								02
Inkwell :		01	01	08	01																				11
Shanked :					03	01	02																		06
Total :	01	01	06	47	35	02	04	01	02	01	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	102

Further analysis was conducted on specific button classes. Within each class types were identified (see illustrations) and measured (fragmentary specimens, where no diameter could be measured, were not included). Bone buttons were broken down into six types. Table 2 reflects a tri-modal clustering pattern for these. The first cluster (1.0-1.3 cm.) functioned as fly buttons, while those clustered between 1.5-1.9 cm. were brace and underwear buttons. The large examples (over 2 cm.) were for outergarments. All bone types - except polished - show clustering around both the small and medium sizes, while only round lip, disc, and polished types exhibited large specimens, being used for other than "traditional" purposes.

Looking at changes in bone types across all collections, there is clearly a trend towards decreased diversity on later sites. While round lip buttons are a little under a third of the entire MV2 collection, they make up half of the Croker bone, and close to one hundred percent by the time of Melwood and Crinan Creek. It appears that other types do continue to appear, but at numbers as low as glass and rubber classes. It is important, however, to emphasize the point that they do not disappear. It had been argued previously (South, 1964), that disc and concave types

do not continue past 1840 (both types were found on Crinan Creek).

Table 3, illustrating metal types, has almost every size represented by at least one specimen. This isn't so unusual considering the diversity of garments worn with these buttons. There are several groupings of size, each of which represent one or more functions. The 0.9-1.4 group were sleeve and possibly legging buttons, while the 1.5-1.8 cm. size are either waistcoats or brace buttons. The larger sizes are used as coat buttons. Function does, however, overlap these clusters. Two-piece buttons seem to fall within the sleeve and coat button categories, while one-pieces are more of the waistcoat and coat sizes. The majority of covered buttons fall within the coat-size range, although there are a few example of waistcoats.

Across all collections metal brace buttons are represented. One-pieces decline over time (there are none on Melwood or Crinan). Two-pieces decrease as well, but do maintain a significant percentage of the later collections. Cloth buttons, lacking from MV2 probably because they did not really start to flood the markets until the late thirties and early forties, increase in percentage. However, metal buttons on the whole do drop significantly over time, replaced by diverse and cheap alternatives.

Pearls and agates (tables 4 and 5) are somewhat more conservative in their diversity. Pearl shirt buttons, (0.7-1.3 cm.) make up the majority of pearls, while polished and shanked pearls, serving as coat buttons are few, but clustered nicely between 2.2 and 2.5 cm. Agates are even more tight, with the greatest percentage between 1.0 and 1.1 cm. Obviously, these would have been used as shirt buttons, and on the occasional dress. Other types, particularly the shanked and selfshanked, make up a very small quantity of the collections, and could have been used on any number of items.

Brief mention should be made of horn buttons. One specimen was recovered in an ash fill from feature one, Area C, Mohawk Village. No other example exists from the collections examined, or from any of the other nineteenth century sites I have encountered. There are no lack of horn buttons, however, listed in the documents. I do not know how horn buttons preserve in the soil, and it may be that they don't, except in an occasional circumstance such as in an ashy fill like feature 1 of Area C. The specimen examined did have that reported "plastic" appearance and sticky feel, so it would not be difficult to identify such items on other sites.

THE BUSINESS OF BUTTONS

Clearly, buttons can be used as a useful dating tool on nineteenth century sites; one merely needs to know what happened in the industry during this time. Their potential as effective indicators of social behavior, however, is questionable. Certainly these buttons came in a variety of forms at a wide range of prices, but, for most of the 1800's, buttons were simply functional devices. And there was such diversity that one could always have a selection of fashionable buttons to choose from. A discrepancy between Melwood, where several expensive metal buttons were found, and Crinan Creek, where almost all metal buttons were simply brace ones, does raise some questions. Melwood was occupied by a rich farmer's son, and Crinan Creek by a poor Scots immigrant. Suggestive, but certainly not a basis for establishing socioeconomic inequality. Only future collections can add light at this point.

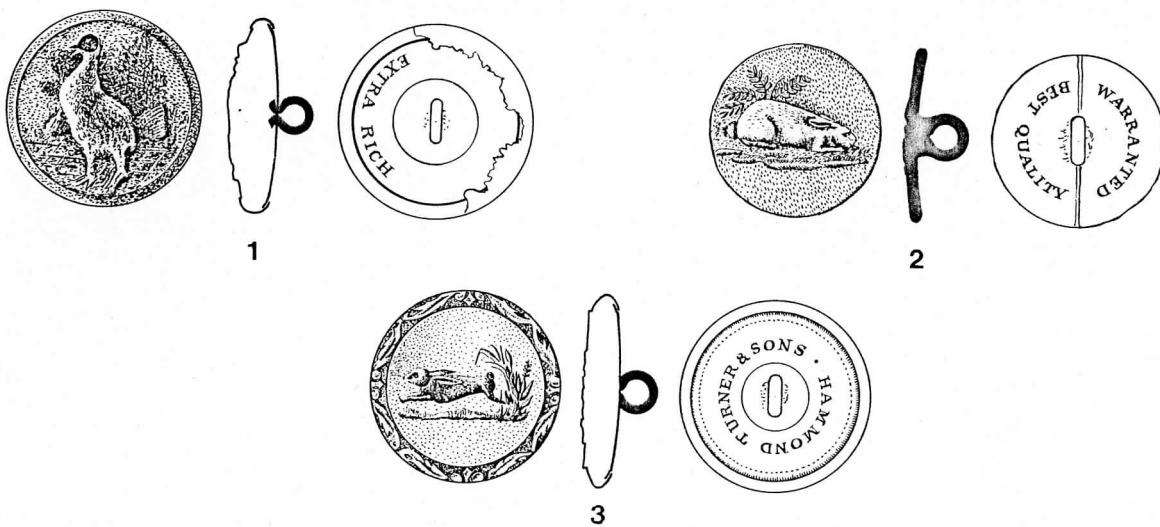


Figure 8: Hunting with Taste

Hunting coat buttons, depicting scenes of the chase, were popular with the fashion-conscious hunter of the nineteenth century. These buttons were one of the most expensive type going. For the archaeologist, these represent one of the "prettier" finds from a site. Number 1 is badly corroded. (Nos. 1 and 2: C.P. No. 3: MV12).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As this study grew, so too did the number of people who assisted. Thanks to Ian and Thomas Kenyon, Paul Lennox, and Roberta O'Brien for access to their collections. Personal thanks to Randy Johnston who, confidentially, spent some hard-earned leisure time supplying me with ideas and several of the nineteenth century articles cited here. Ian Kenyon also supplied ideas and directions when they were needed.

Mary Holfer of the textile department, Royal Ontario Museum, and Ed Phelps, Regional Collections, University of Western Ontario, were helpful answering my questions. Thanks to the editor of KEWA, who graciously withdrew his article submission for this month so I could have room for mine, and didn't yell once as it was being put together. Mary, indentured typist, stayed late again - thanks. Also thanks to Little "G", for help in my study on button wear-analysis.

Finally, great thanks to Thomas Kenyon, who drew all the button illustrations herein, supplying us with as great a pictorial history of buttons as could be hoped for.

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In keeping with the theme for this month's issue, the following puzzle emphasizes the field of Nineteenth Century Studies...Good Luck!

Clue: Find the "Historic" headline.

Answer: 3 words, 17 letters.

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A D A N A C S K R A P S O B
T E K S U M E M U H I U C I
S S A R B L O T C U P S I R
I K E S T R O F W O E L R O
L R P T A C L U C V S I O N
A U O A V I O E I I D A T S
Y B R N E M G H T S B N S T
O B C I R A C S S L B R I O
L E E T N R A I E O U U H N
M R L D A E B T M R T R R E
U E A E G C I I O O T A K G
I T I E A E N R D M O L N R
P W N T T A D B R R N D A O
O E I Z E T H N I C I T Y S
E P I R I S H D Y T N A H S

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Glossary

A

Able
Agate
Archives

B

Bottle
Bos
Brass
British
Button

C

Ceramic
Cups

D

Deetz
Domestic

E

Edged
Ethnicity

F

Forts

G

Gross

H

Historic
Hume

I

Irish
Iron
Ironstone

L

Log cabin
Lot
Louisburg
Loyalist

M

Moody
Musket

N

Nails

O

Opium
Ovis

P

Parks Canada
Pewter
Pipes
Porcelain

R

Rubber
Rural

S

Shanty
Sus

T

Tavern

Y

Yank

HAMALAINEN QUIZ ANSWER FOR LAST MONTH:

Name a "Musical" Lithic Term..... *basal fluting!*

NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

MILITARY BUTTONS FROM NON MILITARY SITES

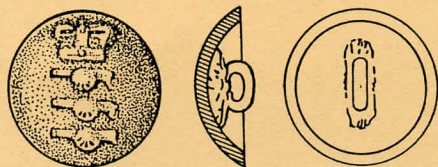
Thomas Kenyon

Occasionally military buttons are found on 19^c homestead and mill sites. It has been suggested that they might be "souvenir" items or perhaps from discarded or surplus uniforms that were re-utilized by the early settlers. The button drawings (below left) 1. to 4. represent the British army and 5. the American army in Canada.

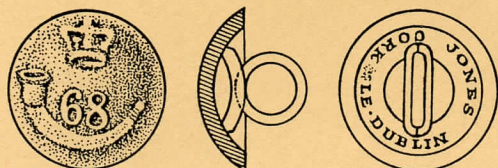
1. The Royal Regiment of Artillery - The design displays, in relief, a crown and three field pieces on a plain background. It is a solid cast brass button with a brass eye. This regiment was stationed in Quebec City from 1759-1871, with a number of Companies or batteries posted in different parts of Upper and Lower Canada throughout this time. From the John Croker Site c. 1820-1845 located in Dunn. Twp., Haldimand County. 2. The 68th Regiment of Foot Durham Light Infantry. In relief, is the number '68' inside the curve of a light infantry bugle, surmounted by a crown. The button is cast pewter with an iron eye anchored in a two tiered boss. Stewart (1962) notes that this "regiment arrived in Upper Canada in 1819 with H.Q. at Fort George with detachments at: 1 company at Amherstburg -- 1 man at Penetanguishene, 18 men at Grand River and 16 men at Queenston Heights -- In 1827 they arrived at York on the S.S. "Queenstown" with detachments to Drummond

Island -- Grand River and Penetanguishene." Excavated from the Mustard Mill site, near the mouth of the Grand River. 3. The 43rd Regiment of Foot Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. In relief, the number '43' within a laurel leaf. The raised letters "Nutting London" is the name of a London button firm in business from c. 1800 to 1912. This is a cast pewter button with an iron eye attached to a large boss. The regiment was active in Canada 1757-1760 and 1835-1846. Also from the John Croker site.

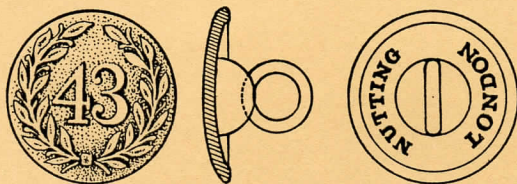
4. The 30th Cambridgeshire Regiment of Foot. In relief, the number '30' within a crowned garter inscribed "Cambridge" and a wreath of laurel round the garter with a spray of rose, thistle and shamrock. It is a two piece machine stamped button with a brass bar fastener. The 1st Battalion of this regiment served in Canada from 1860 to 1870. From the Middleport Site. 5. First Regiment of Infantry. In relief, a script letter I, below an 8 pointed star within an oval. It is a cast pewter button with a brass eye. This American Regiment was active from 1789 until 1815. The button was issued between 1812 and 1815. From the McDougall site c. 1810-1820. Angus McDougall fought in the war of 1812 - perhaps this was a "souvenir" kept by Angus or it could have been from the Americans who invaded the Baldoon area where McDougall lived during the 1812-14 war.



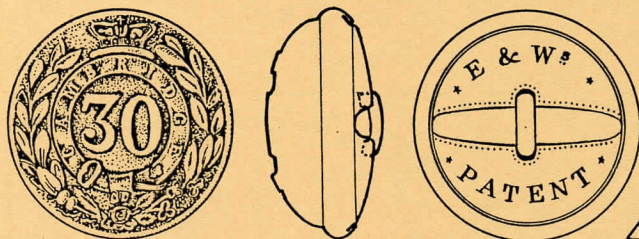
1



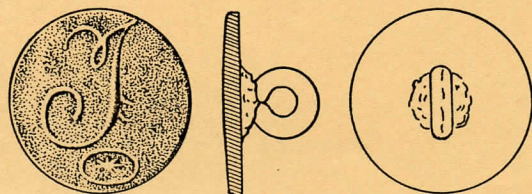
2



3



4



5